

Buying Intentions Influenced by Various Determinants in Tourism

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Marketing has acquired a central role in tourism because it helps organizations to create value in transactions with buyers. Thus, this important area of any business process is used to educate consumers, to add value to their experience in tourism, and to seek new ways to reward loyalty through innovative schemes (e.g., programs for frequent travelers). This paper presents the examination of the responses of 154 tourists in relation to their intention to purchase a travel package and the factors that are usually decisive in the decision making process regarding tourism services, factors that could also create the loyalty that any tourism enterprise can create through marketing.

Keywords: purchase intention, consumer behavior determinants, customer loyalty, multiple linear regression

JEL Classification: M31

1. Introduction

In tourism, the added value of the transaction becomes the basic concept in marketing, especially in the development of relationship marketing to build long-term relationships between customers and suppliers, with consistent quality and value of the predominate transactions, and the mutual benefits. For a travel company, this means it must develop the know-how for marketing and the necessary expertise to understand and properly interpret the needs of the consumer.

Therefore, tourism marketing should be a philosophy adopted in all business operations, so the basics of marketing (research, product, creating the value, promotions, etc.) have to be integrated around customer orientation. Tourism marketing requires all organizations to understand both short-term needs to attract consumers, but also long-term goals to retain them, and thus to improve their level of loyalty.

Loyalty in the tourism sector has been poorly studied; therefore there remain many questions about how to retain customers in the long-term. Tourism has seen the introduction of relationship marketing techniques and indeed has been in the vanguard of the industries that have adopted this focus. Nevertheless, the concept of destination loyalty has received little attention in the literature (Fyall et al., 2003; Yoon and Uysal, 2005) and neither have companies that offer different ways of accommodation.

Today destinations face the toughest competition in decades and it may become tougher still in years to come so marketing managers need to understand why tourists are faithful to certain destinations and what determines their loyalty (Chen and Gursoy, 2001). One might usefully ask whether a particular destination can generate loyalty in people who visit it. In this regard Alegre and Juaneda (2006, p. 686) hold that “some

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tourism motivations would inhibit destination loyalty”, such as, for example, the desire to break with the monotony of daily life, engage with new people, places and cultures or look for new experiences.

In conclusion, it is crucial for a tourism manager to research and understand the way in which consumers make decisions and the determinants that motivate and encourage tourists to make particular purchases, because this is the only way in which companies could gain loyal tourists and have a profitable business, which could surpass all the competitors from this complex area.

2. Customer Loyalty in Tourism

Since the 1990s there has been a large and growing interest in relationship marketing, within the broader field of marketing (Christopher et al., 1994). This has risen as a response to a new competitive era characterized by growing maturity, fragmentation, complexity, and intense competition in markets. At the same time customers have been seeking more personalized vacations and become more sophisticated and demanding, which has forced tourism enterprises to focus their efforts on the construction and maintenance of relationships with the various parties participating in the process of interchanges of businesses (customers, suppliers, competitors, divisions of the company and employees, nonprofit organizations, government, etc.) (Hunt and Morgan, 1994; Grönroos, 1999; Payne, 2000).

Riley et al. (2001) note that the literature on loyalty demonstrates a problem in its conceptualization, to be resolved by empirical means or operational definitions, depending on the purpose of the study. Loyalty is very difficult to define, but usually it appears when a customer continues to believe that the products or services offered by some particular company are their best option. It best fulfills their value proposition whatever that may be and they also take that offer whenever faced with that purchasing decision.

Yoon and Uysal (2005) note that destinations can be considered as products and tourists can visit them again or recommend them to other potential tourists such as friends or family. Chen and Gursoy (2001) operationally defined destination loyalty as the level of tourists' perception of a destination as a good place, one that they would recommend to others, noting that studies which only consider repeat visits as an indicator of loyalty to the destination are deficient. This occurs because those who do not return to a particular destination may simply find different travel experiences in new places, while maintaining loyalty to the previously visited destination.

Being aware of different factors that create loyalty in the tourism industry is the key in having a successful business. It is necessary to recognize what generates loyalty, different preferences of the targeted consumers, the factors and determinants that motivate them to come to the same travel agency. And in this way, the company could have a loyal customer base that will improve the profitability of tourism destinations and that particular firm.

Also, in this field, it very important to take into consideration that recommendations are not made only by the process word of mouth (WOM), but also by the recommendations via Internet (eWOM): websites, social networks, blogs, etc. These types of recommendations are becoming a challenge for academics or practitioners because in the online environment it is difficult to control them.

3. Determinants in the Decision Making Process in Tourism

Determinants are divided into two main categories: those variables which determine whether or not someone will be able to go on a holiday and those factors which determine the type of vacation, providing that the first set of determinants allows a holiday to actually take place. Determinants can be subdivided into: those which are personal to the tourist and those which are external to the tourist (Swarbrooke and Horner, 2003).

Personal determinants of tourist behavior are: (a) circumstances: health, disposable income, leisure time, family commitments, work commitments; (b) knowledge of: destinations, the availability of different tourism products, price differences between competitor organizations; (d) attitudes and perceptions: perceptions of destinations and tourism organizations, political views, preferences for particular countries and cultures, their attitudes to standards of behavior as a tourist; € experience of: types of holidays, different destinations, taking a trip with particular individuals or groups (Swarbrooke and Horner, 2007).

These determinants will differ among tourists and depend on the time. Different individuals will perceive certain determinants to be more important than others, based on their attitudes, personalities, principles, fears, and past experiences. Even for the same person, these determinants will vary, depending on

different factors such as family situation, changes in age and experience as a tourist. Thus, these personal determinants could represent a market opportunity for the tourist industry.

Moreover, external determinants of tourist behavior are represented by: (a) political factors: government legislation and policy, immigration restrictions and visa requirements, civil disorder and terrorism, the nature of the political system, taxation policy, tourist taxes; the media - travel media (promotion through mass-media and guidebooks), and (b) non-travel media: news programs and wildlife programs on television); (c) tourism organization marketing: foreign destinations' advertising campaigns, tour operator's brochures, travel agent's special promotions (Swarbrooke and Horner, 2007).

Tourist behavior is driven by their own personal determinants or external determinants, depending on their personality and lifestyle. People who enjoy outdoors activities and environment and social responsibilities could be more tented to take into consideration external factors when making a decision to purchase a travel package, while introverted people may be influenced by a series of internal determinants.

In the decision making process, these determinants could be facilitators (e.g., an appealing guidebook) or restraints (e.g., a limited budget) through tourists who want to transform their motivations and desires into reality.

4. Research Methodology

4.1. Research Context and Hypotheses

4.1.1. Research Instrument and Data Collection

The survey represented the research instrument for this article. Through the survey, we explored two main questions, in addition to three socio-demographic questions that were used for classification. Constructs used in the model are presented in Table 1 in terms of their conceptual and operational definition.

Table 1. Conceptual and operational definition of variables used in research

Question no. and dimension explored	Conceptual definition	Operational definition
Q1. Buying intention (Propensity to purchase a travel package)	Planned action of an individual to buy a travel package in the next year.	Not likely 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Definitely
Q2. Preferred travel type	The preferred form of purchasing vacation packages.	Q2a. All-inclusive vacation (that included transport, accommodation, food, drinks) Q2b. Other holiday packages Q2c. Travel services purchased separately (different transportation from accommodation that may or may not be all inclusive).

The primary scope of this study is to understand the touristic behavior of consumers who intend go on a holiday in the next year. In this paper, we measured two interval constructs to examine the proposed relationships. An online consumer survey was developed and used for data collection, from January 4 to March 14, 2014. Primarily, 154 responses were gathered from different forums devoted to online shopping and social networks such as Twitter and Facebook. The profile of the respondents is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Respondents' profile

Sex	Age	Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Male	< 20 years	Pupils	2	100.0	100.0
		Students	10	37.0	37.0
	Between 20-25 years	Employee full-time	11	40.7	77.8
		Employee part-time	1	3.7	81.5
		Free independent	4	14.8	96.3
		Unemployed	1	3.7	100.0
		Total	27	100.0	
	Between 25-30 years	Employee full-time	9	100.0	100.0
	Between 30-35 years	Employee part-time	4	66.7	66.7
		Free independent	2	33.3	100.0

		Total	6	100.0	
	Over 40 years	Employee full-time	1	100.0	100.0
	Total male respondents		45	29.2	
Female	< 20 years	Pupils	4	100.0	100.0
	Between 20-25 years	Students	63	69.2	69.2
		Employee full-time	23	25.3	94.5
		Employee part-time	2	2.2	96.7
		Free independent	3	3.3	100.0
		Total	91	100.0	
	Between 25-30 years	Students	1	12.5	12.5
		Employee full-time	6	75.0	87.5
		Free independent	1	12.5	100.0
		Total	8	100.0	
	Between 30-35 years	Employee full-time	3	60.0	60.0
		Free independent	1	20.0	80.0
		Unemployed	1	20.0	100.0
		Total	5	100.0	
	Over 40 years	Full-time employee	1	100.0	100.0
Total female respondents		109	70.8		

5. Empirical Analysis and Results

To have a better understanding of the data we will be exploring, Table 1 and Table 2, to present the descriptive statistics for the questions and the answers of the respondents from Romania who participated in this online research on their exhibited tourist behavior.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for the propensity to purchase a travel package, in the next year

Q1.	Statistic	1 (Not likely)	2	3	4	5 (Definitely)	Total
Propensity to buy a holiday package in the next year	Frequency	18	35	33	29	39	154.0
	Percent	11.7	22.7	21.4	18.8	25.3	100
	Mean	3.23					

Table 4. Descriptive statistics for the preferred travel type

Q2.	Statistic	1 (Strongly disagree)	2	3	4	5 (Strongly agree)	Total
Q2a. All-inclusive vacation	Frequency	48	23	26	30	27	154
	Percent	31.2	14.9	16.9	19.5	17.5	100.0
	Mean	2.77					
Q2b. Other holiday packages	Frequency	17	39	42	38	18	154
	Percent	11.0	25.3	27.3	24.7	11.7	100.0
	Mean	3.01					
Q2c. Travel services purchased separately	Frequency	31	32	29	30	32	154
	Percent	20.1	20.8	18.8	19.5	20.8	100.0
	Mean	3.00					

Further, we will explore a widely used analysis technique. Regression analysis is a powerful and flexible procedure that used to study the association relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables. This analysis technique can be used in various ways (Malhotra, 2007):

- to determine if the independent variable explains a signifying variance with regard to the dependent variables (if there is a relationship).
- to determine how much of the variation in the dependent variables can be explained by the independent variable(strength relationship).

- to determine the structure or form of the relationship: mathematical equation which is correlated with the independent and dependent variables.
- to predict values of the dependent variables.
- to control for other independent variables when evaluating the contribution of a variable or set of variables.

In this section I will apply a multiple regression which involves a single dependent variable (probability of buying a tourist package) and several independent variables that examined the types of services offered in a tourism package.

Thus, the dependent variable (propensity to purchase a travel package) for the multiple regression will be studied with three independent variables representing possible answers to question 1 of the questionnaire that measured three semantic differential scales. The scales examined the general premises of arranging a holiday, such as all-inclusive vacation (that included transport, accommodation, food, drinks), other holiday packages, or travel services purchased separately (different transportation from accommodations that may or may not be all inclusive).

Table 5 shows an indicator that measures how suitable the proposed regression model is in the research context. This indicator is called the coefficient of determination (R^2) which takes values between [0, 1]. As shown, nearly half (47.2%) of the variation of the variable that studied the predisposition to purchase a travel package in the next period is explained by the proposed model.

Table 5. Regression model for the predisposition to purchase a travel package and the preferred travel type

Model	R	R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.687 ^a	0.472	1.255

In table 6, the ANOVA reports a significant F statistic (9.97) indicating that the use of the model is better than average approximation. The total variance of the model is divided into variation that can be explained by the independent variable of the model (the value of the regression line: 47.155) and the variation that cannot be explained by the independent variable (residual value: 236.43).

Table 6. ANOVA for the regression model for the predisposition to purchase a travel package and the preferred travel type

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	47.155	3	15.718	9.972	0.00
Residual	236.43	150	1.576		
Total	283.584	153			

In table 7 we can observe the predictors of the regression model and the model constant (the Y intercept, respectively the height of the regression line when it intersects the y-axis). In our case, the constant variable 0.910 represents the projected value for the propensity to purchase a tourism package, when all the other variables are 0. Then, coefficients of the regression model were determined in Table 7.

Table 7. The coefficients of the regression model for the predisposition to purchase a travel package and the preferred travel type

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t statistic	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	B		
(Constant)	0.91	0.471		1.933	0.055
Q2a. All-inclusive vacation	0.327	0.075	0.561	4.339	0
Q2b. Other holiday packages	0.265	0.086	0.332	3.096	0.002
Q2c. Travel services purchased separately	0.379	0.079	0.418	2.618	0.005

Based on table 7, we may determine the overall multiple regression equation to predict the dependent variable from the independent variables, as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \beta_3 x_3 + \dots + \beta_k x_k + E$$

Which can be estimated by the following equation:

$$Y' = a + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + b_3 X_3 + \dots + b_k X_k$$

And, in this case, it becomes:

$$Y' = 0.910 + 0.327 * \text{All-inclusive vacation} + 0.265 * \text{Other holiday packages} + 0.379 * \text{Travel services purchased separately}$$

Coefficient 0.327 for 'All inclusive vacation' denotes that an increase by a unit in this variable implies a forecasted increase by 0.327 in the predisposition to purchase a tourism package, while the other variables remain constant. Similarly, the other unstandardized coefficients can be explained. On the other hand, the standardized coefficients are the coefficients obtained by standardizing all variables in the regression model (both the dependent and independent ones).

The t statistic and the associated statistical test of significance are used to test whether a coefficient is significantly different from 0, using a standard level of significance of 0.05. The regression model is appropriate, and all the coefficients of the independent variables are significantly different from 0 for values of significance are less than 0.05. However, the constant variable exceeds the level of 0.05 slightly, indicating a level p-value of 0.055.

6. Conclusions

6.1. Theoretical Contributions

In the current context characterized by the fact that tourism is one of the most important industries in the world, the research that is the subject of this article sought to explore some dimensions of tourism behavior of 154 persons from Romania.

Consumer purchase behavior should be studied in terms of several models that arise during the buying process because it depends on various factors that may occur during an acquisition (e.g. type of holiday, the reasons and factors that determine a particular procurement, lifestyle, social position). Another restriction in terms of tourist products and services is intangibility of these offers, which often leads to doubts and uncertain decisions during the purchase. This is the reason why consumers can frequently listen to advice from friends, relatives, travel agencies or TV; these influences may cause some impediments for companies when studying tourism consumption patterns and habits.

In conclusion, the subject of consumer behavior is the principal instrument to the foundation of all marketing activities which is implemented to establish, promote, and sell different products and services. In order to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of all marketing activities that interfere in the decision making process, companies have to comprehend how consumers take their decisions to purchase different products or services. If they alert with all the changes that may occur in the behavior of consumers, what motivates them or what determinates them to buy, then they will know when to intervene in the process to achieve the results that they desire and also who to target at a particular time with a specific product or service, that will surpass consumer's expectations.

Romania has a well-developed tourism potential, but unfortunately, currently, the means of country promotion are not very well used. The purpose of this paper is to provide new and improved insights into the behavior of tourists and the factors that influence the decision making process for Romanian tourists. Thus, I considered that any development that leads to better understanding and better promotion of tourism is welcomed. Also, future research should draw attention to the process of making the right decisions in this particular area and to understand how consumers respond to different variables. Mostly, it is important to study tourist behavior in relation to different types of tourism activities (mass tourism, niche tourism, and macro-niche tourism, which is further subdivided into cultural, environment, rural, urban, etc.).

6.2. Implications for Managers

In conclusion, it is crucial for a tourism entrepreneur to be conscious of the ways that he could transform his potential clients in loyal clients by using different forms of promotions, and also to use in his advantage the determinants that influence consumers to purchase, in order to have a profitable business.

Is essential for a company to satisfy the needs of their targeted consumers. In his distinguished work, Philip Kotler says that 'usually, the sales of a company comes from two groups: new customers and repeat customers (customers who are loyal to a company)'. An estimation shows that attracting new customers can

cost five times more than satisfying a customer who is loyal to the particular company. Also, may cost sixteen times more to bring a new customer at the same level of profitability that the one already lost.

Customer retention is therefore much more important than customer attraction. For this reason, it is necessary that tourism managers to fully understand all the dimensions that lead to the manifestation of a particular tourist behavior.

6.3. Limitations and Future Research Directions

The limits of this study include those commonly associated with online surveys, including unsystematic sampling procedures, low response rates, weak links between units of analysis and respondents. While the representativeness of the sample can always be improved, for this research particular efforts were made in order to obtain a high response rate and to have a sample which reflects the target population.

Besides the outlined goals, the present research has proposed a validation of the statistical methods used, but for the future it is recommended the improvement of the statistical methods used by performing some additional statistical tests to validate the statistical significance of the results and determine a representative sample (which in this research was not a principal purpose).

Especially in terms of consumer behavior in tourism, it can be argued in favor for a longitudinal study to track and confirm the model based on the behavior of a group of tourists. A cross-sectional study differs from the longitudinal research in the homogeneity of groups and the users' experience of purchasing tourism products.

Also, the research can be extended internationally to observe a comparison analysis between similar data from Eurostat and the opinion of tourists who live in different geographical areas and come from different cultures.

This research leaves additional new research directions that need answers. Future research will focus on the tourist market segmentation by holiday type or most important factors that are required by different groups of tourists. Thus, I will try to determine the profitability of business tourism compared to mass tourism, or leisure tourism, and the dimensions of consumer behavior that are triggered more strongly for efficient advertising campaigns targeted by these two types of tourism.

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